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30 November 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

SUBJECT : Newsmen's Views of CIA

1. At the invitation of the Senior Seminar, Mr. Peter Lisagor, Chief of the Washington Bureau for the Chicago Daily News, and Mr. Joseph Harsch, Chief Editorial Writer for the Christian Science Monitor, appeared before the Seminar on 3 November. During their visits, we were able to glean some impressions of the media's views of CIA.

2. Mr. Lisagor was quite generous in his remarks about the public image of the Agency. In his view, the Agency is a highly effective and capable organization. He asserted, however, that he and his colleagues of the press pay little heed to CIA unless the Agency makes a mistake and the mistake becomes public knowledge. He emphasized that the current public image of the Agency is particularly good as a result of the Pentagon Papers and the role the Agency is said to have played on issues involving Vietnam. Even the Marchetti piece which appeared in U.S. News and World Report almost concurrent with Mr. Lisagor's talk had not, in Mr. Lisagor's opinion, detracted from this good image. Overall, he felt that CIA officers with whom he has had personal contact are able, competent and intellectually mature men and clearly not cut from a "James Bond." In this vein, he claimed that among the press the notion of the Agency man is of "a pipe smoking intellectual."

3. Mr. Harsch's presentation which was considerably broader than Mr. Lisagor's resulted in no specific commentary, either favorable or unfavorable, on the Agency image. Mr. Harsch's candid and forthright approach left little doubt, however, that had he held strong views about the Agency he would have aired them with the Seminar members. Moreover, his attitude and manner toward the Seminar members during the informal question and answer period suggested that he respected and valued the views and opinions of the participating officers. His comment to a member of the staff following his appearance to the effect that the high calibre of the Agency officer is the mainstay of the CIA public image would seem to sustain this latter impression.

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Chief, Senior Seminar

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